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The English language consists of about forty elementary sounds. Very few languages are richer in this respect. Thus in writing English, about forty letters of the world-alphabet would be required. Place a child in a schoolroom with forty other children, and in a month it will know their names and faces. In a month it would also learn the looks and uses of forty letters, if each letter always denoted the same sound. Most children would learn them from parents or playmates before they went to school. The forty letters would simply force themselves on the memory even of children who did not go to school at all. No one can seriously reflect on this point without arriving at the conviction that by this method illiteracy can in a few decades be banished from the globe. No savage so low but learns to use the sounds of his language, to string them together into words, and to associate ideas with these words. No savage so low but will learn to associate each audible sound with a visible sign, and thus be enabled to read—provided each visible sign represents always the same sound.

Two years added to every child's school time! Every educator knows what that means. The absorbing question in the educational world is how to find time, in the brief eight years of school life, for the constantly increasing number of branches that seem indispensable. Twice as much time ought to be given to physical exercise in the sunlight, twice as much to manual training; room ought at once to be made for those practical conduct lessons hitherto so strangely neglected but now making their way into the schools through the efforts of Professor Milton Fairchild of Baltimore. The gift of two additional years would mark a veritable renaissance of education.

In the United States there are twenty million children of school age—to say nothing of the three hundred million children in other lands. The saving of two years to every child would thus mean forty million years saved to the nation in every eight-year period. If time is money, what is the value of forty million years? And this enormous gain can be purchased by the trifling investment of twenty to fifty thousand dollars for two or three international conferences for the elaboration of a world-alphabet. Whoever is capable of serious reflection must admit that the Jackson Bill is the most important bill now before Congress.

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### A COURSE IN SALESMANSHIP

Salesmanship is not primarily a textbook subject. Although a few good books have been written on it, we do not depend upon them for instruction in this department of our work. To take charge of this we have been fortunate in securing Mr. Nathaniel C. Fowler, Jr., a man of wide experience in buying and selling. In his course, which is given to the senior class, there are working demonstrations of the selling of goods. These demonstrations are given by

expert salesmen, covering a wide range of business. They sell either to Mr. Fowler or to actual buyers, who come from business houses with which the salesmen are accustomed to deal.

In such a course as this too much presentation of abstract facts and general information has but little value in teaching the practical side of the work; therefore in the introductory lecture Mr. Fowler merely outlines the general features of salesmanship. The discussion presents four essentials in the equipment of a good salesman. In the first place, he must be honest. Without honesty he cannot look forward to a long and successful career in this line of work. In the second place, he must know his goods. If he lacks this knowledge he cannot command the respect of the buyer. In the third place, he must have the ability to "size-up" his prospective customer. Unless he can quickly discover his customer's temperament and peculiarities he will blunder along to certain failure. In the fourth place, he must know something more than his goods. Without broad and general information he cannot meet the buyer on grounds of common interests. With this preliminary discussion the way is prepared for the demonstrations.

The object in securing different salesmen is to cover a great variety of goods and to give a wide range for the study of the methods and personality of the seller. The boys see that no two salesmen are alike. They do not use the same methods. Each relies upon his own individuality. When Mr. Fowler acts as buyer, he tries to illustrate the types and the moods of various buyers. Sometimes he assumes that he has never seen the salesman before. Sometimes he recognizes him as an old friend with whom he has dealt for years. At one time he takes the attitude of the surly, indifferent person who wants nothing and who does not intend to buy, though he may find later that he needs the goods. At another time he is friendly, easily convinced, and buys readily.

A few examples will show the practical working of this scheme. An advertising agent for a magazine approaches Mr. Fowler, who represents the advertising manager of a cereal company. The manager assumes that he is advertising all he wants to, and that he knows more about the advertising business than the agent does. The latter allows the manager to talk himself out, doing little but ask him questions which show him that he knows less about the advertising business than he thought he did. The agent then presents his arguments, assuming the position of superiority and not allowing his prospective customer an opportunity to break in upon him.

In another demonstration we have the case of a salesman who has changed his line of goods since last seeing his customers. The buyer has been waiting for him, and is ready to give an order for the old line of goods. He is disappointed and not inclined to look at the new goods. The salesman spreads them before him, briefly describing them, and asserting that the only advertising the firm is depending upon is the quality of the goods.

At another time there is a demonstration by a salesman who is breaking

into another man's territory. The buyer has always been satisfied with the firms from which he has been buying for years, and does not care to change. The quiet, unobtrusive manner in which the salesman shows his samples finally attracts the attention and interest of the buyer. An important feature of this demonstration is an exhibition on the part of the salesman of the manner in which a buyer should not be approached in this particular instance.

A salesman of underwear brings with him a buyer to whom he has sold goods for a number of years. In this case the particular difficulty which the salesman has to overcome is the fact that the firm for which he is selling has changed the label on an old line of goods. This is the basis of a strong objection on the part of the buyer, as he has established a large trade under the old label.

In a demonstration given by a salesman of gasoline engines we have an example of the importance of the salesman's knowledge of his goods. In this case he has to know not only his own engine but others in order that he may make the sale.

Further details of this feature of the work are not necessary, as the examples given show the manner in which we attempt to solve a special problem in each demonstration. No small part of the value of this work is derived from the discussions which follow each demonstration. The boys ask questions of the salesman, and thus get expert advice regarding methods, character of approach, and forms of language to use.

After the work of the course is well under way there are also exhibitions of salesmanship by the boys of the class. The boys chosen for salesmen bring to class samples of some line of goods with which they are familiar, and sell to other members of the class. After the demonstration Mr. Fowler criticizes the work. Another source of practical information furnished by the boys themselves is our apprenticeship plan. Those who have been out working describe to the school their experiences. They explain the way in which they succeeded and point out errors which led to failure.

Since seeking a position is a part of salesmanship—the boy is selling himself—several business men come to the class and the boys apply to them for positions. One acts the part of the man who is interested in the boy and who wishes to help him all he can. Another takes the attitude of the man who is harsh and indifferent to the interests of the applicant and who throws every possible obstacle in his way. The boys are then criticized and given much valuable information regarding the manner in which they should conduct themselves.

A unique feature of the work this year was furnished by the Jordan Marsh Company. This company fitted up in a large lecture-hall a miniature store. Four different kinds of goods were displayed, and sales were made with all the details accompanying regular business. First there was a sale of women's suits. In this the saleswoman showed her skill by remembering that her customer had purchased a suit from her the year before. At the yard-goods

counter the salesman had the difficult task of satisfying a purchaser who made up her mind that she did not want the goods which she had selected first, although the piece had been cut from the web. In another sale the customer wished a particular color in a kimona, but was unable to find it. She was finally satisfied with something she had not at first intended to buy. The fourth sale was made to a gentleman who had conceived the whimsical idea of surprising his wife by taking a dress home to her.

The teaching of salesmanship in our school is still in the experimental stage. and this discussion can do little more than present the general plan of the work. We cannot yet point to definite results which justify all the attempts we are making. The work, however, gives the boy confidence in himself. It increases his resourcefulness by placing before him a definite set of problems, which he studies with the aid of experienced men. It brings him into close contact with successful salesmen, who arouse his enthusiasm and give him ideals toward which to work. This spirit of enthusiasm is perhaps of no less benefit to him than the knowledge of maxims as to what he should or should not do.

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## THE NEED OF INDUSTRIAL EDUCATION<sup>1</sup>

PINEHURST, N.C., November 7, 1911

*The President, Commercial Club of Chicago:*

SIR: It is with sincere regret that I find myself unable to keep the engagement which I made to meet the Commercial Club. My regret is doubly keen on account of the subject which you propose to discuss. You have before you, in the subject of industrial education, a matter which in my opinion is of fundamental value to our national life and to the welfare of the oncoming generations. I do not make that statement lightly, but as a deliberate conclusion after an opportunity for considering the subject from two points of view; I have looked at the matter from the standpoint of the mechanic apprentice (although even in my shop days the time of thorough apprenticeship was passing, as it is now practically altogether passed) and I have studied it in the light of a fairly careful inspection of the educational methods and results that are making such marked impress on the social life of some of the European countries. I believe no man can have experienced at first hand either the lack in this country of educational facilities adapted to industrial life or have studied intelligently the facilities of this character which some European countries are now offering, without a shock to his traditional American complacency or without reaching the conclusion, as I have, that our educational system must be markedly developed before it will meet present-day conditions.

We have grown used to regarding America as a land of unequalled resources,

<sup>1</sup> Read at a meeting of the Commercial Club of Chicago, November 11, 1911.